

REMARKS

By the present Amendment, claims 1-8 are cancelled and claims 9-21 are added. This leaves claims 9-21 pending in the application, with claim 9 being independent.

Substitute Specification

The specification is revised to eliminate grammatical and idiomatic errors in the originally presented specification. The number and nature of the changes made in the specification would render it difficult to consider the case and to arrange the papers for printing or copying. Thus, the substitute specification will facilitate processing of the application. The substitute specification includes no "new matter". Pursuant to M.P.E.P. § 608.01(q), voluntarily filed, substitute specifications under these circumstances should normally be accepted. A marked-up copy of the original specification is appended hereto.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 9 covers a modular hydraulic system comprising at least one primary valve block and at least first and second groups 12 and 14 of connecting lines all connected in fluid communication at one point by a connecting line of the first group. At least two of the connecting lines of the first group 12 are connected in fluid communication to a respective connecting line of the second group. At least three dummy components 18 are provided for receiving definable valve components connected to the connecting lines of the second group. At least two second dummy components 20 are connected between a common connecting line 14a of the second group and another associated connecting line 14b of the second group.

By arranging the modular hydraulic system in this manner, individual valve components can be associated with each dummy component such that, together with other components, they perform the necessary and desired functions for the operation of the modular hydraulic system. In this manner, the primary valve block is configured as a matrix with transverse and longitudinal rows, together with the dummy components, permit performing a large number of system functions in a space saving and cost-effective manner.

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,080,983 to Stumpmeier. The Stumpmeier patent is cited for disclosing a modular valve system in which lines A, B, F, P, and T were allegedly analogous to connecting lines 14 of this application and the lines 8 connecting the valves are analogous to connecting lines 12 of this application. The distributor modules are allegedly disposed in Stumpmeier transverse bores 8 along line A, B, F, etc. providing different connections and functions, including connecting adjacent lines, any one of which can be designated as “dummy” components. The particular claimed configuration is alleged to be obvious in view of the Stumpmeier flexibility. The use of pressure gages or 3/2 valves with the Stumpmeier valve base is alleged to be obvious. The choice of a tank is also considered to be obvious.

The Stumpmeier patent appears to disclose a valve base with parallel channels F, T, A, B and P. Holes in the body 1 communicate with the channels and receive hydraulic valves. Transverse bores 8 are provided for receiving distributor modules of different types, and intersect the coplanar passages T, P, A, B and F to enable connections required for a desired hydraulic circuit between those channels. However, none of the valves to be located in the holes provide at least three first dummy components coupled to the connecting lines of the second group and at

least two second dummy components connected between a common connecting line of the second group and another associated connecting line of the second group. No comparison between the Stumpmeier system and that recited in the claims of this application demonstrates the presence of this arrangement in the Stumpmeier patent, particularly of the second dummy components connecting to second group lines. No valves connect the Stumpmeier bores 8.

Accordingly, claim 9 is patentably distinguishable over the Stumpmeier patent. None of the other cited patents cure these deficiencies in the Stumpmeier patent.

Claims 10-21 being dependent upon claim 9, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, these dependent claims recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patents.

Claim 10 is further distinguishable by at least one dummy component being unoccupied by a valve component, blocking a respective fluid conducting passage of at least one connecting line of the first and second groups, or forming a fluid-connecting path between connecting lines of the second group. No such arrangement is shown to be disclosed in the Stumpmeier patent.

Claim 11 is further distinguishable by the primary valve block comprising external side connecting points, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

Claim 12 is further distinguishable by the specific additional components recited, particularly within the overall combination.

Claim 13 is further distinguishable by the use of a secondary connection block comprising additional dummy components.

Claim 14 is further distinguishable by the first dummy components receiving valve components, within the overall claimed combination

Claim 15 is further distinguishable by the valve component being pressure control valves, return valves, chokes or diaphragms.

Claim 16 is further distinguishable by the additional dummy components being switching valves, pressure control valves or valves functioning as a pressure scale.

Claim 17 is further distinguishable by the switching valves being 2/2-way switching valves or 3/2-way switching valves.

Claim 18 is further distinguishable by the arrangement of the dummy components in groups.

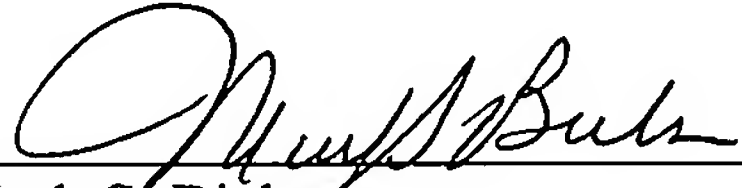
Claim 19 is further distinguishable by the groups being of 2 and 3 dummy components.

Claim 20 is further distinguishable by the claimed tank module.

Claim 21 is further distinguishable by the tank parts of varying modules.

In view of the foregoing, claims 9-21 are allowable. Prompt and favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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